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ABSTRACT

This document summarizes the discussions and presentations made at a seminar on Research Coordinating Units (RCUs) held by the Coordinating Committee on Research in Vocational Education (CCRVE) on December 14, 1979. Presentations were made on the following topics: establishment and activities of the CCRVE; historical perspective of the RCUs; result of a survey of RCU directors conducted for the National Institute of Education's Vocational Education Study; and future planning issues. A general discussion concerning the future direction of the RCUs follows the presentations. Appended to this summary are the following items: list of participants; RCU Study--Questionnaire; and a brief summary of the meeting. (BM)

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SEMINAR ON RESEARCH COORDINATING UNITS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Seminar Proceedings
December 14, 1979
CCRVE

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Bureau of Occupational & Adult Education
U.S. Office of Education

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

On December 14, 1979, the Coordinating Committee on Research in Vocational Education (CCRVE) sponsored a seminar on the Research Coordinating Units (RCU's). Presentations were made on the following topics: the CCRVE by Sidney High, a member of CCRVE; a historical perspective of the RCU's by Lawrence Braaten, the original RCU project officer; result of a survey of RCU Directors conducted for the National Institute of Education's Vocational Education Study by Henry David, director of the Study; and future planning issues by Glenn Boerrigter and Paul Manchak, who are currently working with the RCU's. A general discussion concerning the future direction of the RCU's followed the presentation with Arthur Lee, Senior Research Specialist at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education and a former RCU Director, offering a final summation. This paper summarizes the meeting's presentations and discussions. However, the section on "BOAE Perspective and Planning Issues" expands upon the remarks that were presented at that time. Attached to this summary are the following items: List of Participants (Tab A), RCU Study — Questionnaire (Tab B), and a "Summation of the Meeting" by Arthur Lee (Tab C).

COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The Coordinating Committee on Research in Vocational Education was established by the Education Amendments of 1976 and is composed of representatives from the National Institute of Education, the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, and the Office of Education. The representation from the Office of Education includes the Office of Career Education, the Bureau of Education for Handicapped, and the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education. CCRVE has three legislatively mandated areas of responsibility: to develop a fiscal year plan that establishes national priorities for research in vocational education, career education, and education and work, as well as development, exemplary and innovative programs, and curriculum development projects; to coordinate efforts of member

agencies to avoid duplication of effort; and to develop an effective project management system. CCRVE meets bimonthly and this seminar on the RCU's is one of the seminars sponsored by CCRVE.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 first recognized the need for coordinated research and development efforts on the part of States in the field of vocational education. The Act provided for promoting the establishment of State research capabilities. States were invited to submit applications to establish research coordinating units. Twenty-four were funded in fiscal year 1965, and an additional twenty were funded the following fiscal year. The majority of these early RCU's were located either at colleges and universities or within State departments of vocational education. A meeting of the RCU Directors was held at the Ohio State University in 1967 for the purpose of forming a national network, but there was limited coordination of effort among the States.

The number of RCU's expanded until there are now fifty-seven. They have adapted to the changes that have been made in subsequent legislation. Before the 1976 Education Amendments, research, curriculum development, and exemplary and innovative activities were placed in separate categories. The 1976 Education Amendments grouped the three areas together as program improvement and required that these areas be a part of the five-year state planning process.

In 1967, Oregon State University, with Keith Goldhammer as Project Director, was awarded a contract to conduct an evaluation of the RCU's. Eighty-nine percent of the then existing RCU's participated. One of the major findings of the study was that the RCU's shared common conflicting role models: the dilemma in balancing research and development activities; university versus state department of education location and the effect location had on clientele; and questions as to what their future role would be within the field of vocational

education. Two major difficulties of the RCU program were identified: the RCU's being imposed on the field rather than originating from the field; and the lack of preparation on the part of RCU Directors and their staff to deal with both research and vocational education leadership. Another set of problems existed due to the uncertainty of funding and the restrictions this uncertainty placed on planning activities. Two major achievements of the RCU's during those years were the development of systematic retrieval systems for vocational education research and development information, and the focusing of attention upon research in the field of vocational education. Evidence indicates that the materials within the retrieval systems were used primarily by RCU staff. The study concluded that the RCU's could be an important force in the future of vocational education. However, before they could be truly effective they needed to deal with these difficulties and problems associated with the role model conflicts.

RESEARCH COORDINATING UNIT STUDY

The National Institute of Education (NIE) vocational education study was mandated by the 1976 Education Amendments to undertake "a thorough evaluation and study of vocational education programs conducted under the Vocational Education Act of 1963...." In 1979, the RCU Personnel Association surveyed the RCU's on behalf of NIE to identify their key features and to determine the effect of federal policy, especially the 1976 Amendments, on their activities. This study surveyed the perceptions of the RCU Directors as to their functions, duties, and responsibilities as well as their views of Federal vocational education policy.

Forty-four of the fifty-seven RCU's responded to the mail survey. Only three of the large States did not respond. A number of States found it difficult

to answer all of the questions. Many of the fiscal questions were misunderstood and the answers provided were inconclusive. Some States either did not have the necessary records or had such differing record keeping systems that the data provided were not comparable. There was a wide range in the reported amounts of monetary resources available to the States. The need does exist for the coordination of these resources to assure both coherence and cumulative effects between the State and national program improvement endeavors. The need for national program improvement priorities was also expressed by the RCU Directors. The RCU's should be responsive to local demands, but national priorities are necessary for the coherence they provide in the research effort.

Diversity in the behavioral characteristics of the RCU's exist, but a greater similarity in their locations also exists than was so prior to the 1976 Amendments. Most of the RCU's are located in the State education agencies — predominately within the vocational education divisions. A few are located in research bureaus, and only a small number remain in the universities.

The RCU's are staffed according to each State's hiring procedures with the number of staff assigned being limited by functions and budgets. A great deal of variety in the RCU staffing patterns was reported by the Directors: from 19 or 20 professional to zero, and from 18 support personnel to zero.* Several of the RCU Directors hold other positions within the State education bureaucracy including that of the State Director of Vocational Education.

The Directors were asked to describe their areas of responsibility, and their responses showed great diversity and unevenness. A few RCU Directors said that they have no direct program responsibility for exemplary and

*These are the staffing levels reported by the RCU Directors. The figures do not indicate the absence of an RCU but rather that staff is not assigned full time to the RCU.

innovative projects. Similarly, others said that they have no responsibility for curriculum development. Some said that they were not involved in the dissemination of R&D products. Some, but not all, RCU Directors said their areas of responsibility included work with CETA and YEDPA Programs, and with the SOICC's. The variations in responsibilities further demonstrate the absence of a universal "model" RCU.

One area of RCU activity that invites examination is that of linkage with the network of Federal, State and intrastate agencies. Thus, twelve States reported that they did not work regularly with the National Center for Research in Vocational Education. The RCU's are required by the 1976 Amendments to submit project abstracts and final reports of Program Improvement projects to the National Center. States may differ in their view of whether or not submitting abstracts and reports to the National Center constitutes a regular working relationship. The RCU's perceive a low interaction level with the Federal government. Only forty percent of the RCU's said that they had regular contact with BOAE, the governmental agency responsible for providing program assistance.* The Directors reported that the RCU's also worked with other organizations including the State Advisory Councils for Vocational Education and the Curriculum Coordination Network. Clearly, there is reason to strengthen the network relationships between the RCU's and the above mentioned agencies.

The RCU Directors were asked to express their overall reaction to the Amendments of 1976. Their responses showed that many do not differentiate between the legislative and appropriation processes. They tend to express a belief

*"Regular" work is interaction beyond the legislative reporting requirements. A more specific definition of the term would be determined by the individual State.

that their program difficulties would be eased, if not solved, if they were to receive the total funds allotted by the legislation. Also, some of the Directors tend to think in terms of local difficulties and problems rather than in terms of national difficulties and problems. The evidence suggests that instead of looking for assistance from each other and from national agencies, including the Federal government, States try to overcome program difficulties at the individual State level.

There are significant differences among RCU Directors in their views of the 1976 Amendments. The majority of those responding felt that the new legislation provided the States with discretion through the consolidation of funding and that it improved the planning process by forcing choices to be made and priorities to be created. However, they also felt that due to funding limitations this flexibility in choice might go against the intent of Congress. Because of the limited resources States could fail to provide for all key functions. The Directors expressed dissatisfaction with the requirement for use of a project product in the classroom within five years (especially for research projects). They also recommended that high risk research be encouraged by providing a set aside.

The RCU Directors expressed concern with the adequacy of Federal funding and the restriction caused by the necessity to fund projects through contract versus grant awards. The RCU Directors felt that procurement standards should be eased in order to prevent money from being spent on administration rather than research. The RCU's would like to see more linkage of program improvement with staff development. Still, 60 percent of the Directors reported overall positive gains in the operation of the RCU due to the changes in law.

BOAE PERSPECTIVE AND PLANNING ISSUES

Vocational Education Program Improvement

No "model" RCU exists, and many would argue that the diversity among the RCU's

reflects the diversity among the States and Territories. However, all of the RCU's are currently operating from a common basis — the Education Amendments of 1976 and the accompanying regulations. Subpart 3 of the 1976 Amendments underscores the need for program improvement and change. It authorized the use of funds by States to carry out vocational education program improvement. The legislation provides examples of activities to be undertaken as well as placing some requirements on these activities. While States are permitted broad discretion in designing and carrying out program improvement responsibilities, the legislation mandates "appropriate" recognition of the value and need for program improvement. There also is the basic implication that State agency personnel will exhibit an understanding of the meaning and definition of the program improvement process.

Program Improvement: Law and Regulations

Each State must create an RCU in order to expend program improvement funds and to coordinate the research, exemplary and innovative and curriculum development programs. According to the 1976 Amendments, contracts for research and curriculum development projects must show

"a reasonable probability that the contract will result in improved teaching techniques or curriculum materials that will be used in a substantial number of classrooms or other learning situations within five years after the termination date of such contract." (P.L. 94-482, Subpart 3, Section 131(b) and 133(b))

Exemplary and innovative programs

"shall indicate the proposed disposition of the program or project following the cessation of Federal support and the means by which successful or promising programs or projects will be continued or expanded within the State." (P.L. 94-482, Subpart 3, Section 132(c))

The regulations continue to emphasize the need for States to disseminate the results of projects funded in all of the program improvement areas. According to the regulations, each State is required to develop a comprehensive plan of program improvement which includes: the intended use of funds, a description of program improvement priorities, and the dissemination procedures. The

regulations require that project abstracts and final reports be submitted to the National Center and to BOAE, acting for the Commissioner of Education. The National Center is assigned to act as a clearinghouse for the States' program improvement activities by the 1976 Amendments.*

Personnel Development with Program Improvement

The continual development and training of the personnel involved in vocational education should be an integral part of Program Improvement. Based on this, several RCU's include personnel development as a part of the total operational concept of a comprehensive model for program improvement. By including personnel development activities along with research, curriculum development, and exemplary and innovative projects, these RCU's are expanding the concept of program improvement. The Bureau encourages the RCU's to develop better linkages between their activities and personnel development.

Program Improvement Leadership

The Bureau is currently expanding the nature of its relationship with the RCU's. The Bureau continues to participate with the National RCU Association and to attend their National Conference. In addition, BOAE has instituted, on a monthly basis, an informational mailing to the RCU's. BOAE would like to see the RCU's expand upon their activities which have traditionally tended to be low risk. The Bureau feels that the RCU's should assume a more instrumental role for program improvement leadership. The RCU's need to be viewed as the key program improvement agency. For those States that wish, BOAE will be offering technical assistance in developing program improvement strategy. BOAE will need to move from a compliance relationship with the RCU's toward a relationship which offers Federal leadership and assistance.

*In order to reduce the burden placed on the States, the Bureau is amending the regulations to require the RCU's to submit abstracts and final reports only to the National Center.

Continuity of Activities

The ultimate goal of the RCU's is to create a successful series of events that lead from a selected problem to a solution. In order to best accomplish this a program improvement management strategy that would follow a continuum from research through development through dissemination/diffusion is needed. What is done in vocational education research and development should ultimately have application at the local level in terms of improved programs and/or services. Successful use of the continuity concept requires coordination of activities by the RCU Director. The absence of coordinated continuity caused Congress to consolidate vocational education research, curriculum development, and exemplary and innovative activities under Program Improvement and to include personnel development functions as supportive services in the legislation.

Cycle of Activities for Program Improvement

Program improvement at the State level must include the cycle of activities that allows for planning, implementing, and assessing systematic program change. In order to have systematic program change the RCU's need to develop their process of planning, researching, developing, disseminating and evaluating. Personnel development also needs to be included in this process cycle. Skill building in the utilization of innovative methods and materials for teachers, supervisors, teacher educators, guidance personnel, and local and State level administrators needs to be provided. A complete cycle is necessary for States to produce a quality program improvement strategy.

Quality Standards

While the judgement of quality is not an exact process, it is possible to determine if a project or program is cost-effective, and if an intended aim was realized. BOAE is in the process of developing quality standards for program improvement which allow for adaptation to the individual nature of each State.

These standards would apply to the quality of planning as demonstrated in the Annual State plan and the quality of operation and management as reviewed through the MERC/Q process.

Systematic Planning

The planning process should have a strategic approach. Institutionalized planning does not necessarily produce a "good" result nor does planning necessarily produce a strategy; both strategic planning and coordination are needed in order to develop a complete program improvement network. One method of determining the existence of problems with the planning process is to see if one's plan of activities has been accomplished.

Evaluation Process

The RCU should have written standards for evaluating both the performance of a project and the final product(s) from the project. The effects of the operational program and the impact of program improvement activities must be evaluated to formulate future plans. In that way projects and programs can build upon each other. Through the evaluative process, accountability can be incorporated into the RCU's planning process.

Dissemination of Products

A program improvement strategy should include a dissemination policy and strategy. The RCU's should have written standards for the dissemination of products. These standards should be concerned with insuring that dissemination occurs. The RCU's standards for dissemination of products should include an active and targeted system that insures that potential users of the product are made aware of the product. RCU's that aggressively market products need to have a high degree of confidence that a product merits active marketing. Thus, independent evaluations may need to be conducted of such projects beyond the RCU staff evaluations.

Program Improvement Funding Strategies

The purpose of program improvement is to improve vocational education by the support of research, exemplary and innovative, and curriculum development programs. Program improvement resources are intended to upgrade, develop and expand vocational education programs and not to maintain on-going programs. Currently, the Federal government provides only about 10 percent of all dollars spent at the State and local levels for public vocational education. The Federal role is expected to shift in the 1980's with more emphasis on program improvement including less compliance and regulation-oriented allocation of funds.

The RCU's presently receive a formula grant which is a part of the total State allocation. Under this mechanism, RCU's fund projects according to their own State's individual needs as identified through their needs assessment and planning processes. With an anticipated shift in the role in the 1980's, support for program improvement excellence should be emphasized rather than basic program operation. In order to have a more effective program improvement strategy in the future, the Federal and State program roles and responsibilities need to be more clearly identified.

The Program Improvement Linkages

The problems of melding the Federal, State, and local responsibilities for program improvement appears with the planning process. Close linkages must be maintained with many governmental and non-governmental agencies in order to address Federal, State, and local priorities and needs. The RCU's are only one of the participants in the "plan/allocate/coordinate/evaluate" decision. Often because of this, the RCU's are faced with working within the priorities that have been established for them. The RCU's should consider coordinating their activities with other State agencies that have similar program interests.

The Program Improvement "Network"

Program improvement ought to be viewed as a comprehensive research, development, and diffusion process rather than as a collection of categorical programs. The planning process must be sensitive to both the needs of the State and the national priorities. Program improvement efforts in individual States should compliment, reinforce, and extend national and multi-state efforts for the improvement of vocational education. By supporting quality products, the RCU's are encouraging adaptability and cumulativeness of effort. The emphasis on quality should lead to cooperation among the RCU's and to establishment of a State and nationwide "network" of program improvement. As a coordinated nationwide strategy, this "networking" ensures the best use of Federal dollars through an emphasis on improving and extending programs rather than on maintaining programs. The networking concept emphasizes a multi-faceted approach involving numerous actors and personnel at both the Federal and the State levels. Participation on the part of the States is voluntary and therefore the network concept is not a Federal system, but a program improvement system.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Throughout the seminar, the participants discussed the issues presented. The following remarks were provided as an overview by the representatives of various organizations.

Several participants expressed the belief that the RCU's should concentrate more efforts on the dissemination of project products and outcomes. Both the National Center and the Joint Dissemination Review Panel/National Diffusion Network have procedures for recognizing and disseminating quality products. The RCU's should be encouraged to participate with these programs.

Gene Bottoms, the Executive Director of the American Vocational Association, felt that BOAE and the RCU's should further emphasize the validation of their products and procedures in order to gain support for program improvement activities. He also expressed the need to involve the local education agencies in setting program improvement needs and priorities.

Jack Jennings, staff counsel to the House Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education, said that when Congress reviews program improvement projects it will be concerned with the degree of compliance with the law, the quality of the end product, and the difference these products have made in the classroom. The States need to document product use in the local education agencies and they need the help of the field in tracking these products, otherwise only a periodic evaluation can be done.

Arthur Lee, Senior Research Specialist at the National Center, offered a final summation of the proceedings. RCU's serve a variety of purposes, and have a wide range of characteristics due to the individuality of the States. They owe their existence and continuation to Federal vocational education and their future depends on Federal legislation. The RCU's are attempting to build the capacity for program improvement and they have the means to achieve this. The RCU's potential promises much for the future.

Coordinating Committee on Research in Vocational Education
Sponsoring Seminar on
Research Coordinating Units in Vocational Education

DuBois Room
Horace Mann Learning Center

December 14, 1979
9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

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QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE EFFECTS OF CONSOLIDATION OF
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE ROLE OF THE RCU.

All RCU Directors, it is safe to say, are familiar with the Congressionally-mandated study of vocational education being conducted by the National Institute of Education. Henry David, Director of that study, has appealed to us for assistance, and our President, Gene Bigger, and our Executive Committee have responded affirmatively.

They have agreed to have a survey conducted on the consequences of provisions of the Education Amendments of 1976 that affect program improvement functions, funding, and activities. This issue is of high interest to all RCU Directors, and conducting this survey, is, consequently, to our benefit.

The NIE study proposes to monitor the several kinds of changes that can presumably be linked to the 1976 legislation over time--that is from now to 1981. In line with that objective, this first survey instrument is designed to provide detailed baseline data. The instrument is the joint product of a committee of RCU Directors and the NIE Vocational Education Study Staff.

It would be most helpful if you would fill out and return this questionnaire within two weeks of its receipt.

Please return the completed questionnaire to:

Dr. Carroll A. Curtis, Director
Research Coordinating Unit
Pennsylvania Department of
Education
Box 911
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126

Name _____ Date _____

Title _____

Address _____

Title of immediate supervisor _____

If your immediate supervisor is not the State Director of Vocational Education, does he report directly to the State Director?

_____ yes

_____ no

How many years have you been in your present position? _____

A. ORGANIZATION OF THE RCU

	<u>1975-76</u> or immediately prior to the 1976 amendments		<u>1977-78</u> or after the 1976 amendments	
	<u>yes</u>	<u>no</u>	<u>yes</u>	<u>no</u>
Please check either yes or no in both columns.				
1. Does your State allocate funds for:				
a. Research?	—	—	—	—
b. Exemplary and innovative programs?	—	—	—	—
c. Curriculum development?	—	—	—	—
2. Are research, exemplary and innovative programs, and curriculum development coordinated through an RCU?	—	—	—	—
Please write the appropriate response in each column.				
3. Is the RCU located in a				
a. College or university?				
b. SEA-research bureau setting?				
c. SEA-Vocational Education Department setting?				
d. Other? Specify _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. What is the number of FTE professional staff in the RCU?	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. What is the number of FTE support staff in the RCU?	_____	_____	_____	_____

1975-76
or immediately prior
to the 1976 amendments

1977-78
or after the 1976
amendments

6. P.L. 94-482 permits program improvement activities to be carried out by contract or intramurally by the RCU. Which method do you use for:

(Specify by contract (C) or intramurally (I).)

- a. Research? _____
- b. Exemplary and innovative programs? _____
- c. Curriculum development? _____
- d. Other? Specify _____

yes

no

yes

no

7. Does your RCU work regularly with the:

- a. Regional Curriculum Network (SLR)? _____
- b. State Advisory Council? _____
- c. National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE)? _____
- d. Office of Education/BOAE? _____

B. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RCU

1. Responsibility for which of the following activities has been formally assigned to your RCU?

- a. Research? _____
- b. Exemplary and innovative programs? _____

	<u>1975-76</u> or immediately prior to the 1976 amendments		<u>1977-78</u> or after the 1976 amendments	
	<u>yes</u>	<u>no</u>	<u>yes</u>	<u>no</u>
c. Curriculum development?	—	—	—	—
d. Professional development:				
(1) Teacher education?	—	—	—	—
(2) Staff development?	—	—	—	—
e. Plan for program improve- ment?	—	—	—	—
f. Program improvement priority determination?	—	—	—	—
g. R and D product dissemi- nation and diffusion?	—	—	—	—
h. Guidance and counselling?	—	—	—	—
i. Approval of new projects?	—	—	—	—
j. Grants to assist in over- coming sex bias?	—	—	—	—
k. Program Evaluation State Plan?	—	—	—	—
l. Disadvantaged?	—	—	—	—
m. Handicapped?	—	—	—	—
n. Management Information System?	—	—	—	—
o. CETA?	—	—	—	—
p. YEDPA?	—	—	—	—
q. NOICC/SOICC?	—	—	—	—
r. Contracting?	—	—	—	—
s. Monitoring contracts and/or grants?	—	—	—	—
t. Planning the budget for the RCU?	—	—	—	—
u. Other? Specify _____	—	—	—	—

C. BUDGETARY AND RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS

	<u>1975-76</u> or immediately prior to the 1976 amendments	<u>1977-78</u> or after the 1976 amendments
1. What is your state's total allocation for Program Improvement and Supportive Services (Subpart 3 in '76 amendments)	\$ _____	\$ _____
2. Of the total allocation for Program Improvement and Supportive Services how much is used for:		
a. Research?	_____	_____
b. Exemplary and innovative programs?	_____	_____
c. Curriculum development?	_____	_____
d. Vocational guidance and counselling?	_____	_____
e. Vocational education personnel training?	_____	_____
f. Grants to assist the state in overcoming sex bias?	_____	_____
g. Other? Specify. _____	_____	_____
3. Does your state allocate resources for Program Improvement and Supportive Services		
a. According to the six legislative categories on an annual basis; or		
b. Does it determine resource allocation based on priorities without regard to legislative category?	_____	_____

	<u>1975-76</u> or immediately prior to the 1976 amendments	<u>1977-78</u> or after the 1976 amendments
4. How much of the total allocation for Program Improvement and Supportive Services comes from:		
(1) Federal monies?	\$ _____	\$ _____
(2) State monies?	_____	_____
(3) Other?	_____	_____
5. How much of the total allocation for Program Improvement and Supportive Services is used for:		
a. Administrative expenses (including in-house research)?	_____	_____
b. Grants and contracts?	_____	_____
6. How much <u>local</u> money is used for program improvement activities (estimate)?	_____	_____
7. What percent of the funds expended annually for research by the RCU is used for projects based on:		
a. Priorities determined by the State Director of Vocational Education and his or her staff	_____ %	_____ %
b. Priorities determined by the RCU Director and his or her staff	_____ %	_____ %
c. Unsolicited proposals from LEA's	_____ %	_____ %

1975-76 1977-78
or immediately prior or after the 1976
to the 1976 amendments amendments

8. What is the budget of the RCU?

\$ _____ \$ _____

D. REACTIONS TO P.L. 94-482 AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Are there activities that seem not to be authorized that are needed to facilitate program improvement?

_____ yes. Specify _____

_____ no

2. Which operational changes in your RCU, if any, do you attribute to provision of P.L. 94-482? _____

a. Which legislative provisions, if any, do you believe led to operational improvements? _____

b. Which legislative provisions, if any, have adverse effects and should be eliminated? _____

3. Who makes the final decision regarding:

a. Distribution of funds?

_____ RCU director

_____ other (specify title _____)

b. Letting contracts?

_____ RCU director

_____ other (specify title _____)

4. Do you think the law is sound in consolidating funds and removing categorical provisions?

_____ yes _____ no

For either response, why? _____

5. Do you have additional reactions to the pertinent provisions of P.L. 94-482? _____

Seminar on RCUs in Voc Ed
December 14, 1979

Summarization
by
Arthur Lee

The seminar dealt with the origin, evolution, functions, variations, and potential of the RCUs, and moved through that process fairly well to focus on the last, the RCUs' potential. It was done with a commendable cross section of interested individuals participating, and with a considerable amount of excellent dialogue.

Paul Manchak offered a possible direction for the RCUs potential through comprehensive planning, and although problems with it's implementation were noted, it seems significant that the discussion came to the center on potential. In that regard there are several conclusions to be observed from the Seminar.

1. The RCUs apparently serve a variety of purposes.
2. In different States they represent a wide range of characteristics.
3. They owe their origin and probably their continued existence to Federal vocational education legislation.
4. Their potential probably depends on Federal legislation also.
5. Their most common reason for being seems to be program improvement, more particularly helping build the capacity for program improvement at the State and local levels.
6. The bottom line, the conclusion of the Seminar seems to be:

The RCUs may be misnamed, they may be widely different in different States, and they may be less efficient or effective than we wish they were; but, their accomplishments outweigh their failures; their value to vocational education overrides their inadequacies; and their history justifies a future. Moreover, the future of the RCUs offers potential benefits in vocational education program improvement to an extent that very serious consideration of that potential is justified in the next legislation.